

## Muhammad Ali At The O2

**TN** ENTERTAINMENT FEATURED

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By Mark Taha



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[This exhibition was [reported here](#) previously; this is Mark Taha's first hand account].

An excellent day out, the only fault I could find would be no real mention of Ken Norton. For the rest, it's great. On entry, they give you an audiophone with which to listen to various recordings, of limited use to us technophobes, but most people will find it useful! We hear mainly from Hugh McIlvenny and his words are also found in the programme.

The Ali memorabilia comes mainly from the Trevor Beattie collection, including the gloves from the first Frazier fight. There's also a "treasure trove of documents" from the late Harry Carpenter and non-stop films of Ali's career, stretching back to some of his amateur fights, and excerpts from commentaries, including of his walkover against Brian London.



We hear, of course, of his non-boxing life, his growing up in a segregated community, with pictures of the **Scottsboro Boys** and Ku Klux Klan, his paradoxically joining the separatist Black Muslims, his draft refusal and outrageous victimisation as a result, and his time as an international statesman in his own way; he's seen with world leaders like Carter, Brezhnev and Mandela. An interview with his devoted British friend and supporter Paddy Monaghan surprised me; I'd always thought he had an Irish accent. The exhibition closes with a half hour montage of his life – remember his forcing himself to light the Olympic flame in 1996? – and the serious philosophical quotes from him makes one regret that he never had his own newspaper column. There's a petition in the shop nominating him for the Nobel Peace Prize. They've often done worse!

Finally, if you go, I recommend the nearby Harvester restaurant for a really good post-exhibition meal at a reasonable price.

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